Svetlana Prokopyeva, a Pskov-based stringer for the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Russian service and the Echo of Moscow news radio station, is being investigated for comments critical of Russian authorities in relation to a suicide bombing last year, according to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the journalist, who spoke to CPJ. Russia's federal media regulator, Roskomnadzor, said those comments, made during a broadcast on the Pskov affiliate of Echo of Moscow, amounted to "justifying terrorism."

On 6 February 2019, armed special forces police raided Prokopyeva's home and seized two cell phones and three laptop computers, as well as many documents relating to her work, Prokopyeva told CPJ. She said police took her to a local station, where she was interrogated before being released. Prokopyeva's lawyer was present during the search and interrogation, according to the Russian office of Human Rights Watch. On the same day, local police conducted a "crime scene examination" of Echo of Moscow. Prokopyeva told CPJ that she was interrogated by police again on 7 February and that police forced her and her lawyer to sign an agreement stating that they would not disclose sensitive information about the investigation. Pskov police could not be reached by phone for comment.

The investigation into Prokopyeva stems from comments she made while hosting a show on the Pskov affiliate of Echo of Moscow on 7 November 2018, during which she discussed a suicide bombing attack in Arkhangelsk in October, when a 17-year-old detonated a homemade bomb inside a local Federal Security Service building. Prokopyeva said on-air that the bomber was "a teenager who grew up under Putin's rule" and that "a 'ruthless state' had raised someone who saw violence as the only path," according to a summary of her remarks by Human Rights Watch.
A transcript of the broadcast was published on Echo of Moscow's website and by local news portal Pskov Newsfeed. In December 2018, Roskomnadzor issued a warning to both outlets and both removed the transcripts. Later that month, Roskomnadzor fined the radio station 150,000 rubles (approximately US$2,280) and Pskov Newsfeed 200,000 rubles (approximately US$3,040) for carrying her comments. Prokopyeva could face charges under Article 205.2(2) of the Russian criminal code, which penalizes the public justification of terrorism; if found guilty, she could face up to seven years in prison.

**UPDATES**

23 Sep 2019: On 20 September 2019, journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva was formally charged with publicly justifying terrorism. The journalist was also asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement and a written undertaking not to leave the Pskov region.

16 Aug 2019: On 13 August 2019, Svetlana Prokopyeva filed a complaint with the ECHR. Prokopyeva complained on grounds of the search in her apartment and seizure of equipment and documents, which endangered the confidentiality of the sources of information.

12 Jul 2019: On 4 July 2019, Svetlana Prokopyeva was placed on the Rosfinmonitoring's list (Federal Financial Monitoring Service of the Russian Federation) and her accounts were blocked.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- EFJ-JMWU joint statement: "Russian journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva wrongly charged with justifying terrorism"
- EFJ statement: "Labelled as “terrorist”, Russian journalist Svetlana Prokopieva had her bank accounts blocked"
- Russian Union of Journalists statement: Владимир Соловьёв о ситуации с журналисткой радиостанции "Эхо Москвы в Пскове"
- RSF statement: "Russian radio journalist could get seven years for commentary"
- RSF statement: "Russian journalist put on “terrorist” list over radio commentary"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

OSCE 07 Oct 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative reiterates his call for dropping criminal charges against journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva in the
Russian Federation.

_statement by Harlem Désir_

**23 Jul 2019 |** Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights asks High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation to continue to accord close attention to this case with a view to ensuring full respect of Ms Prokopyeva’s rights and freedoms

_statement by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights_


_statement by Dunja Mijatović_

**13 Feb 2019 |** OSCE Media Freedom Representative calls for dropping of criminal charges against Radio Ekho Moskvy journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva in Russia.

_statement by Harlem Désir_